



ENGL 2440

Division: Humanities

Department: English

Course: ENGL 2440

Title: Folklore and Literature

Catalog Description:

This course surveys literary texts that draw on oral traditions in their plots, characters, or language. The emphasis is on canonical and multicultural American literature, and the course also asks students to examine artistic aspects of oral storytelling.

General Education Requirements: Humanities

Semesters Offered: TBA

Credit/Time Requirement: Credit: 3; Lecture: 3; Lab: 0

Clock/Hour Requirements: 0

Offered for Non-Credit: No

Prerequisites: N/A

Corequisites: N/A

Justification:

References to folklore (the beliefs, customs, and traditional art forms of specific groups) can be found in all literature, and folkloric elements often contribute to the core of the literary work. Thus, the study of folklore and literature provides students with a helpful critical lens with which to analyze both literary works and the process of literary creation.

In addition to fostering students' critical reading and writing skills, this course builds Snow College's offerings in folklore. A recent survey of folklore studies in Utah found course offerings in folklore at Dixie, SLCC, UVSC, BYU, USU, Utah, Weber, and Westminster (*Folklore in Utah*, USU Press, 2004. 249-61). One course at Snow, English 1500 (Classic Myths and Folk Tales), remains useful, but a course is also needed that focuses on the ethnographic aspects of folklore studies. Such a course will move toward making Snow College's offerings comparable to other schools.

This course also serves English, anthropology, humanities, and communications students planning to transfer to four-year schools. This course prepares students for upper division courses in folklore as well as literature.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course students will:

- understand the interrelationship between oral and literary art and will gain familiarity with expressive cultures of a variety of religious, ethnic, and racial groups, including their own
- practice critical reading and research skills and will articulate responses to literary works

- practice interview and fieldwork skills
- gain multicultural understanding and an appreciation for artistic expression in a variety of media.

Content:

This course requires students to:

- complete two short units that open the semester
 - an overview of what folklore is (revising the concept from merely signifying lies and fairy tales) and how it relates to literature
 - an assignment that asks students to document folklore from groups of which they are a part
- read four to five novels as well as short selections of poetry, nonfiction, and fiction on literature that recontextualizes folklore by adopting plot elements, characters, or phrasing
 - the readings are drawn from the literature of different folk groups: Native Americans, African Americans, Chicanos, Asian Americans, and Euro-Americans
 - the readings will also include canonical authors in American literature such as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Washington Irving, Mark Twain, Charles Chesnutt, Sarah Orne Jewett, Zora Neale Hurston, and others
 - other readings will focus on the folklore of Sanpete county through both the fieldwork exercise and readings from William Jensen Adams and Virginia Sorensen.

General Education Outcomes:

1) Read effectively, constructively, and critically.

Students read literary works from a variety of genres and are required to demonstrate comprehension of and engagement with the texts. This demonstration occurs in their written responses, contributions to class discussions, and their performance on quizzes and exams.

2) Write clearly, informatively, and persuasively.

Students write both response papers for each novel, and these response papers require students to translate their reading experience into a logical narrative. Students also write one argumentative essay that allows them to compare literary texts. The essay is revised through a peer review process. Finally, students also describe the results of their folklore fieldwork.

5) Apply a cultural and historical awareness to a variety of phenomena.

This course requires students to gain familiarity with the history and culture of a variety of American religious, racial, and ethnic groups. Because understanding the social context of the literature is a key interpretive task for the course, students do background research on a variety of cultural practices, historical events, and social conditions and use this information to illuminate their reading and writing.

8) Apply ethical reasoning to a variety of contexts.

By studying the folklore and literature of specific groups, students come to see the logic and efficacy of other worldviews. This understanding can help them respond to cultural conflict with greater sensitivity and with a greater respect for the beliefs of others.

9) Respond with informed sensitivity to an artistic work or experience.

Students gain an appreciation for a wide range of artistic expression both written and oral. Their skills in critical

reading and writing make their responses to art more measured.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Short Response Papers (1-2 pages each) 15%
- Bi-weekly Quizzes 10%
- Comparative Essay (5 pages) 10%
- Folklore Collection (2-3 pages) 10%
- Midterm (short answer and short essay) 25%
- Short Assignments 5%
- Final (short answer and short essay) 25%

Percentages are approximate

Representative Text and/or Supplies:

Texts for the course include novels and shorter articles or literary works. Representational texts include:

- Novels
 - Rudolfo Anaya, *Bless Me Ultima*
 - Frank Chin, *Donald Duk*
 - Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
 - Sarah Orne Jewett, *The Country of Pointed Firs*
 - Maxine Hong Kingston, *Woman Warrior*
 - Mark Twain, *Roughing It*
- Shorter Works
 - William Jensen Adams, selections from *Sanpete Tales*
 - Phyllis Barber, selections from *Parting the Veil*
 - Charles Chesnutt, selections from *Conjure Tales*
 - Sandra Cisneros, selections from *Woman Hollering Creek*
 - Louise Erdrich, *Saint Marie*, and *Jacklight*
 - Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Bosom Serpent*, and *Young Goodman Brown*
 - Washington Irving, *Rip Van Winkle*
 - Issac B. Singer, *Gimpel the Fool*
 - Virginia Sorensen, *Where Nothing Is Long Ago*

Optimum Class Size: 20

Maximum Class Size: 30

Signatures:

I hereby submit this course syllabus:

Melanie Jenkins, MA, Associate Professor

I hereby find this course consistent with the goals and resources of the English Department:

Melanie Jenkins, MA, Associate Professor, Chair

I hereby find this course consistent with the goals and resources of the Humanities Division:

Sheryl James Bodrero, PhD, Associate Professor, Dean

I have discussed the need for library resources related to this class with the person submitting the syllabus:

Lynn Anderson, MLIS, Technical Services Librarian (Main Campus)

Michelle Olsen, MLS, Campus Librarian (Richfield Campus)